MAX STAX PRESENTS: Frankintosh or Macinstein?

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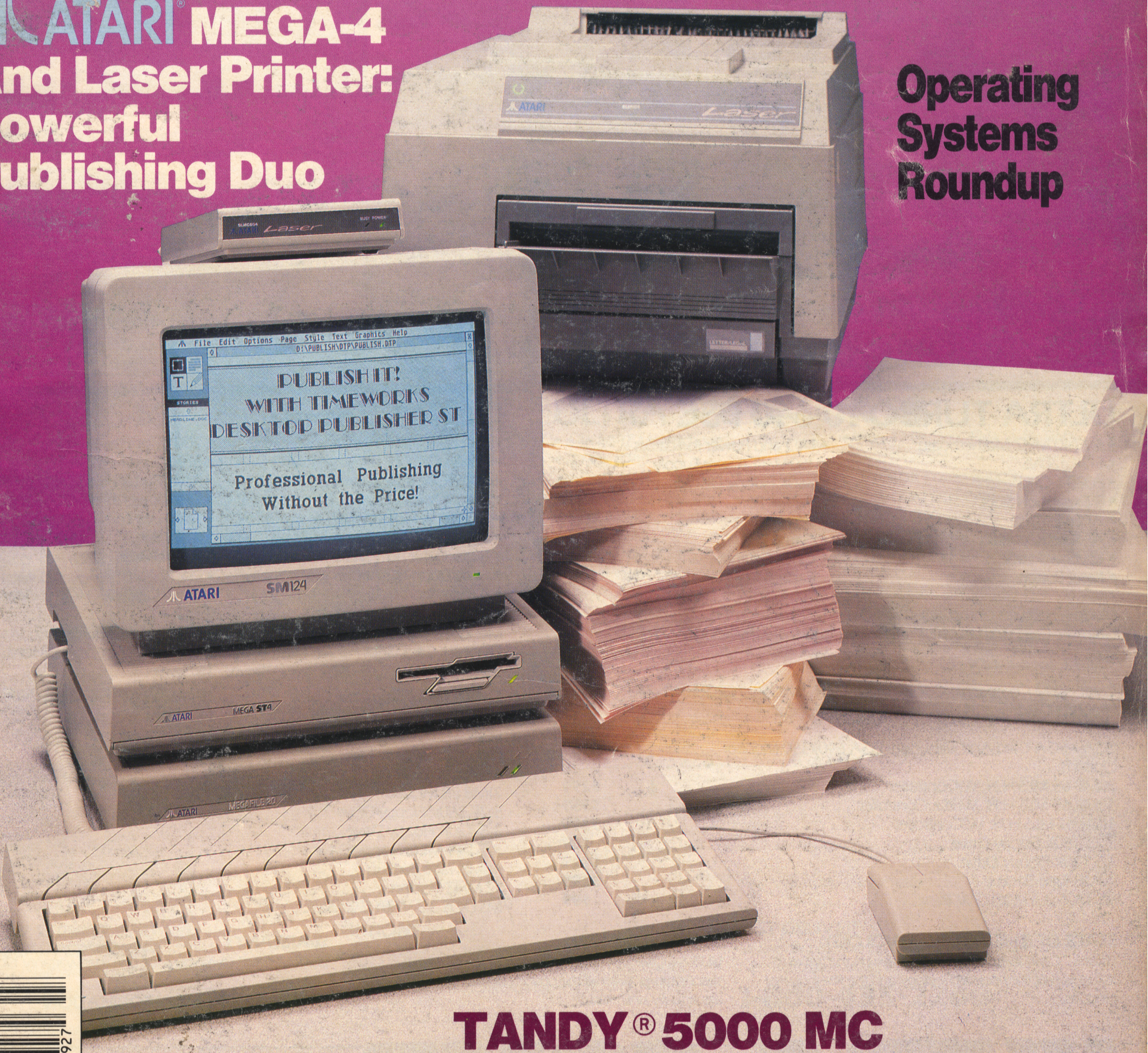
Operating Systems Roundup



TANDY® 5000 MC Professional System Micro Channel Compatible

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ATARI ST

The ST Control Panel, #2
How Do We Look-and-Feel Today?

by D. F. Scott

It's one thing to go "underground" to pick up the latest "scoops" or rumors from the people who create such things—generally those who run BBSs in their closets. It's another thing entirely to talk to the people who lay the ground.

Once again *Computer Shopper* consults its regular panel of five of the leading ST software and hardware manufacturers and authors, for their opinions of the status of their industry—not just the Atari realm. The control panel consists of:

Gordon Monnier, president, Mich-Tron, Pontiac, MI

Frank Cohen, president, Regent Software, Canoga Park, CA

David Beckemeyer, president, Beckemeyer Development Tools, Oakland, CA

Dan Moore, Co-partner, Data Pacific, Denver, CO

John DeMar, president, Quantum Microsystems, Inc., outside Syracuse, NY

As before, we asked each panel member the same three questions, and recorded their answers on tape. The answers presented here verbatim are spontaneous responses from each panel member, without having heard beforehand the views of their fellow members. The questions are presented here as they were posed, and responses have been edited in sequence for clarity.

Question One: Does the ST need its own HyperCard?

Dan Moore: Something like HyperCard would help. The reason people seem to like HyperCard is simplicity. It's a tremendously complicated program, but to the user it looks very simple. It's very understandable. That is the whole goal of a window/mice/icon interface, to make it so you don't have to learn something arcane called BASIC to write usable programs. In fact, in HyperTalk you can write very powerful programs with very pretty interfaces, and not really do anything seriously hard from the programming side.

I do have problems with HyperTalk. Speed, for one thing; it is somewhat slow. But [HyperTalk] is something that people would like. Everybody likes to some extent to be able to program their computer. Most people don't have five years to learn to program in C or assembler or anything else, especially if they're trying to run a business and the computer's just a tool.

If the ST had something like HyperTalk, it would help; but the big trouble with it helping is, no one knows they're out there. If Atari were going to do something like HyperCard, or if a third-party company did something that was very close in look-and-feel (but not close enough to get sued); then [Atari could] take out ads in the middle of "Moonlighting" or whatever, and appeal to its customer base. Say, "Look folks, you don't have to go spend this much money for a Mac SE to run this program. You can run "AtariCard" for half the money, and on a Mega, and in color!"

There's so many other useful Mac programs, and HyperCard is just one. It is the catch-phrase of the year, but it is just one program. I would say the majority of our [Magic Sac customers] are either running Mac desktop publishing/word processing or Excel. As long as Excel runs, we're still going to sell a lot of Magic Sacs. Real spreadsheets, the ST has some that are good but not great. They don't have an Excel yet.

With something like HyperCard, if Atari were selling it with every machine, or if it were free, they might get away with the development costs. I cannot see anyone [producing] an Excel, because no one's going to buy a $400 program on an ST. They'd have to do some serious advertising to attract more business users, and change the machine image before you could sell a $400 program on STs. Whether or not we want to sell $400 programs is another question. Is that the market [Atari] should be selling to? I don't know which market they should be in; I know they should make up their minds.

David Beckemeyer: I think HyperCard is still not a defined issue. I'm not doubting that it would have an effect on the ST. I think it would have to be some sort of a clone, or exactly as good as HyperCard on the Mac, to be worthwhile. I think its long-term effect has not been determined.

I think it's like, in a strange parallelism, when BASIC was first available on micros. Previous to that, you had to have hackers hacking out 8080 code, so micros didn't go anywhere. BASIC came out, and all of a sudden your average guy could start plunking away. HyperCard, in a strange way, is a sort of parallel to that, at the next level. Now the average guy can plunk away at HyperCard, and accomplish applications that are a lot more sophisticated than you could do with BASIC; but I think the BASIC idea was to open the machine up. I don't know what the long-term effect of HyperCard is going to be on development as a whole.

Frank Cohen: I was at the Washington Area AtariFest back in November, where David Small [of Data Pacific] brought up the fact that the Macintosh's real kicker product was Excel, and the PC's was pretty much Lotus 1-2-3 and dBase. The ST does need some sort of key product like that. SQL is making big inroads in the IBM PC and Macintosh market; we have it on the ST with Regent Base (that's my only plug for Regent Software). You also have a really good dBase III Plus clone in dBMan, you have a 1-2-3 clone in VIP Professional—although most people think it's slow.

The only question you might have

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Metacomo's MCC Pascal

by Wynn Rostek

This month we'll take a breather from the communications program, and look at the Metacomco Pascal compiler. MCC Pascal is a rather complete package. In addition to the compiler and a "shell" you get an editor, debugger, linker and resource construction program.

The MCC Pascal "shell" is called Menu + . In addition to the expected features a few nice twists have been added. The first thing I noticed about the system is that it allows you to run within a directory. While more and more ST software allows convenient use of a hard drive, none of the early stuff did.

Even though you could use some of the early compilers on a hard drive, they often insisted on having at least a portion of the program in the root. This isn't a big deal if you only own a single compiler, but when you have 5 or 6 compilers, it can get ugly.

It has taken a long time, but the compilers released today are geared towards hard drive use. In the early days, software companies tried to produce packages that would run on a single drive system. The results left much to be desired.

The great fear in the early days was that you locked out too large a segment of the ST market if you insisted on the consumer having two drives or a floppy and a hard drive. Now that the systems have been out for several years, software companies know that anyone serious about the ST as a programming platform will have at least 2 floppies, and very likely a hard drive as well.

Being able to bury the entire compiler package is helpful not just to the serious programmer, but to the large number of ST owners getting used to living with a hard drive. After suffering through on floppies, most people rejoice to move into a hard drive. Problems develop several months later because they still have floppy disk mentality.

When you get your first hard drive, you think you'll never run out of space. Since having programs on the hard disk is so convenient, every piece of software you own ends up on it. Within a month of when you first install the hard drive, floppies end up being used only to transport programs to and from machines that have no modem.

Sooner or later it happens, the disk fills up. Usually this is just about the time you move the last of your programs to the hard drive. Things go on nicely balanced for quite some time, but eventually someone needs a copy of the latest picture you downloaded from the local BBS, or maybe a bug patch to some program. You know the file is there somewhere, but where?

After a fruitless half hour of scannig your hopelessly packed hard drive, you start thumbing through boxes of floppies and shortly send your friend on his way, program in hand. The fruitless search through a hard drive packed to the bursting point soon becomes very common.

I think a very good measure of a person's intelligence is how long they live with an overflowing hard drive before they figure out that programs used less than once a week are probably best left on a floppy disk until needed.

Sooner or later most everyone comes to the conclusion that the hard drive is best used for programs run daily and packages that won't fit on a single floppy, but some of the dimmer people may take years to catch on. (Before you start sending in the posion pen letters, yes, there are exceptions to this.)

One of the weakest points of the ST is that unlike DOS boxes, we don't have a convenient way to force the "operating system" to look in specific places for certain types of files. Actually this is not a function of the operating system, it's really the command processor that gives us this feature.

In DOS, you can set up paths that specify which directory or drive should be searched when looking for certain files. This is performed at the command processor level by setting variables in the environment. UNIX works the same way, and this is a very powerful feature

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GFA Draft

by Gary S. Futral

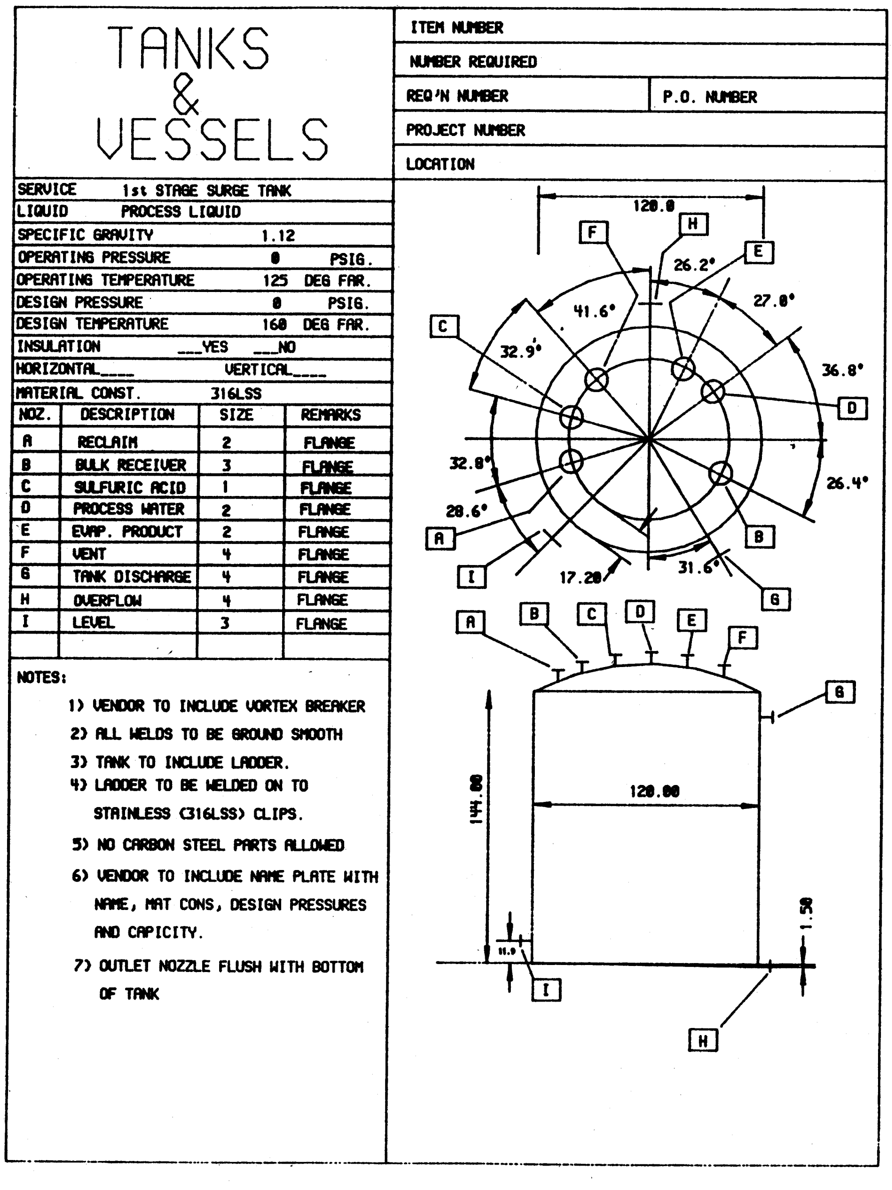
The adjustment from a paint or pixel oriented program like Paintworks and Degas to computer aided drafting is a rather confusing and often frustrating task. However, for the engineer or architect who finds the need for greater flexibility and power, the results can be rewarding and satisfying. GFA Draft by GFA Systemtechnik (sold by Michtron in the U.S.A.) has presented itself as a competent CAD program with many desirable features and, after working with it I agree with its claims. Of course, there are some drawbacks which will be noted. The reader is asked to carefully check any drafting program for features versus price before deciding on which to buy.

A lot of programs have manuals that are next to worthless and end up getting lost under a stack of other worthless manuals. I have found GFA Draft's to be handy to keep around. The manual is very well written. Herein, the user is guided by the hand, step by step, through an example. All functions are described in detail with a summary of them located near the end. The only gripe I have is that it is the paperback type instead of being in a looseleaf binder.

What It Can Do

In many ways, a CAD program is very similar to a paint program. One has the ability to draw circles, squares, lines, etc. More advanced pixel oriented programs allow rotating, mirroring, stretch commands and skewing—characteristics which are an absolute minimum for practical drafting. However, it doesn't take long to discover the differences. What I will attempt to do is cover not just those differences but highlight the more powerful features in GFA Draft. One will find I use the terms "vector" and "line" interchangeably. For our purposes they are identical.

GFA Draft works in either medium resolution or high resolution. Upon booting up, I was prompted to enter in a filename; either an existing one could be double clicked or a new file could be started. Once done, the work-window is presented. This is the actual area to be drawn on. Layout-wise, GFA Draft is very well thought out. Operating within the GEM system all functions are available as drop-down items at the top thus maximizing the area on which to draw. In fact, there are so many features, the menu is divided into two parts. Scroll bars are located along the right side and bottom because, after all, CAD programs are made to handle varying sizes of "paper." The one drawback—if one would consider it a drawback—is that the bottom scroll box had a tendency to get lost behind the coordinates which are continuously displayed.



TANKS & VESSELS

ITEM NUMBER	
NUMBER REQUIRED	
REQ'N NUMBER	P.O. NUMBER
PROJECT NUMBER	
LOCATION	

SERVICE 1st STAGE SURGE TANK
LIQUID PROCESS LIQUID
SPECIFIC GRAVITY 1.12
OPERATING PRESSURE 0 PSIG.
OPERATING TEMPERATURE 125 DEG FAR.
DESIGN PRESSURE 0 PSIG.
DESIGN TEMPERATURE 160 DEG FAR.
INSULATION ___YES ___NO
HORIZONTAL____ VERTICAL____
MATERIAL CONST. 316LSS

NOZ.	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	REMARKS
A	RECLAIM	2	FLANGE
B	BULK RECEIVER	3	FLANGE
C	SULFURIC ACID	1	FLANGE
D	PROCESS WATER	2	FLANGE
E	EVAP. PRODUCT	2	FLANGE
F	VENT	4	FLANGE
G	TANK DISCHARGE	4	FLANGE
H	OVERFLOW	4	FLANGE
I	LEVEL	3	FLANGE

NOTES:

1) VENDOR TO INCLUDE VORTEX BREAKER
2) ALL WELDS TO BE GROUND SMOOTH
3) TANK TO INCLUDE LADDER.
4) LADDER TO BE WELDED ON TO STAINLESS (316LSS) CLIPS.
5) NO CARBON STEEL PARTS ALLOWED
6) VENDOR TO INCLUDE NAME PLATE WITH NAME, MAT CONS, DESIGN PRESSURES AND CAPICITY.
7) OUTLET NOZZLE FLUSH WITH BOTTOM OF TANK

A high degree of flexibility is achieved through the Picture options. One can zoom in and out of the picture via preset settings. The entire drawing can be moved, rotated, or inverted (that is, white on black instead of the defaulted black on white). In this option one can specify the scale and also units of measurements (on scales 1:10 or greater, inches or meters—on scales less than 1:10, millimeters or tenths of inches.) Also, rectangular coordinates can be expressed either in absolute terms (to a fixed point which in GFA's case is the bottom left hand corner) relative terms (between the last clicked position on the screen and the present position of the mouse) and in terms of distance (the actual vector length not broken down into it's X-Y components.

Under the Lines menu a number of features are available to the drafter/designer. Four line types (solid, long dash, short dash and long/short dash) can be utilized from here. Along with this, one can specify the thickness (one is also given the option of showing the thickness or not) "lock" the lines—no more messy line connections, and trim two lines that cross. One can also break two intersecting vectors into four.

The Window feature in GFA Draft is extremely comprehensive. By creating a small window or fence (I was told by Michtron the latter was a more appropriate word to use) with the mouse one can copy, move, rotate, and reflect in the X or Y axis. Other features available to the user are the ability to zoom the contents of the fence in or out, stretch/compress the contents, and skew. However, if that were the end of the fencing capabilities this would be no more than a paint program. The two presets that make this stand out are "cut" and "extract." With the cut preset on, fencing in an area would be no different than what one could do with Neochrome. But with the extract preset on one can only manipulate those objects that fall entirely within the boundaries of the fence. Any vectors partially in are not effected at all. This can be even more specific by either excluding text from fence manipulations or excluding lines. This is one of the single powerful features of GFA Draft.

The creation and manipulation of symbols is extremely important in CAD, and GFA Draft handles this operation very well. Through the Symbols menu any that are created can be stored and any previously made can be recalled and used. But still, this has been taken a step further. All ten function keys can be preset to call any symbol from the disk. This becomes very useful for symbol oriented drawings such as Process Flow Diagrams or Piping and Instrumentation Diagrams used in the engineering process design industry.

Delete functions are handled adequately. One can point the cursor at the line to erase and hit the Delete key. Backspacing deletes each previous vector in the reverse order they were placed. In addition to these, one can toggle Delete Symbol and eradicate an entire symbol. Turning this feature off allows the symbol to be treated like a bunch of vectors.

Under the Options menu is where one finds the special drafting functions such as drawing a square, circle, ellipse, arcs, circle segment, ellipse, arcs, circle segment, ellipse segment, perpendiculars, and rounded corners, angle to a line (this really comes in handy)—all of which are self explanatory and work quite well.

Hatching—the drawing of slanted lines to shade in an area or areas—is also available. One can cross-hatch or single hatch (all lines slanting in the same direction) and specify the line, angle, and thickness of the hatch marks themselves.

Also in this section one finds the feature that makes having a CAD program worthwhile and that is the ability to dimension lines. Depending on the scale and units of measurement one is working in, the spacing is represented in millimeters, meters or inches. If the two lines at which a measurement is to be determined are not parallel, GFA Draft will express the distance in terms of degrees. This is another feature that ranks a plus. In each case, GFA Draft allows the user to specify the degree of accuracy by showing zero to three digits behind the decimal.

Printing or plotting the final drawing is very well supported. A slew of drivers are included on the disk for the user. I used a driver for the Epson 24 pin printer LQ-800 (I printed with the Epson LQ-500 with no problems). Others that are included are drivers for the HP laserprinter, various 9 pin printers and a bunch I had never heard of before. This is the same story for the plotter drivers too.

One of the things that struck me when printing was the quality of the drawing. It looked almost plotter quality. However, this mode was excruciatingly slow.

For plotting I used a driver for the HP-7475 (I plotted with the 7475A—no problems). In fact, a friend of mine who owns the HP-7475A that I used has it hooked up to a Tandy 4000 computer with AutoCadd. When I started plotting with the ST he was impressed with the speed. At first I thought he was just being kind until he started plotting with it on his PS/2 compatible. The difference was indeed very noticeable—the ST plotted faster.

What It Can't Do

With all of its features—I didn't go over all of them—there are some that are absent. Most of them I will mention can probably be carried out with GFA Draft but usually with a series of steps to achieve the same effect.

Center of a circle or line— I kept running into situations where knowing this would have indeed come in handy. I finally figured out a solution

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The ST Control

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is, if there are all those clones out there, why not just buy an IBM PC? If you buy a Blue Chip, you pay about the same price as a 520 color system with two drives. Their box runs more software, but certainly our box is more powerful, having more memory, faster disk drives, stuff like that. As far as a businessman [is concerned], all he's interested in is seeing whether his time, energy, and resources are being put to the best use. The ST's a good machine, but it needs something cohesive to bring all of the products together so that they talk to one another.

The best machine for an example of connectivity would be the Macintosh; that's because Apple is incredibly hands-on when it comes to the development of software for their machine. Then you have the PC, which is kind of middle-of-the-road, because there's so many different machines that there's a good market for companies that come up with just [simple] translation or data-interchange programs. On the bottom of the ring, you have the ST and the Amiga, whose parent companies don't really take a hands-on approach at all when it comes to the marketing or software development efforts. Atari is probably at the bottom of the ladder as far as that goes; there's no leadership from them to form a standard or to give direction to the market.

The Amiga has a little bit more, because they have their successful Amiga 500 which has been making tremendous inroads because of its price, and the commercial advertising they've been doing; whereas the Atari seems to be not so much at a standstill, they're just a very slow-paced, low-selling computer. Atari keeps promising stuff, and that just leads to dismay on the part of the users, which just translates into lower sales for the software companies.

John DeMar: To tell you the truth, the number of people using HyperCard on the Mac is fairly limited. If somebody could do something like HyperCard but actually do real work with it, it's cute, it takes a lot of memory, and it's fun and well-written, but the question is, are people really using it on a daily basis for real productive stuff? I don't think so. The people I've talked to don't. The next generation of software, which is more intuitive and more extendable, probably will come along; but you won't be seeing somebody doing something as extensive as a full HyperCard for the ST until the volume of sales is up there.

On the Mac, I like the name HyperCard because it's mostly hype. If [an ST version] really was like HyperCard, and bundled with the computer for free, it would probably add something to the marketability of the machine. It doesn't need that though.

Question Two: Atari made overtures in Hanover that the next logical upgrade to the ST is being considered, at least on paper. As far as we know, the current design is based on a 68030 running UNIX. If you were head of Engineering and Development, what would you add to that configuration?

Gordon Monnier: I'd like to see a little bit better graphics, a little higher resolution, grey scales on the monochrome screen, large screen monochromes for page layout. It'd have to be an option; some people wouldn't want a big screen. In the color mode, there'd be more colors.

I don't know that you'd want a genlock built in, but a little easier way to access one. It's almost impossible to program one on the ST. A built-in modem would be nice; they've got the price of those down fairly low. We could put a modem on one or two chips. I don't think that many people would use genlock; that'd be pretty expensive.

Frank Cohen: If I were the head of Engineering, first of all I would cancel every project that they had, and would start from scratch with a realistic production schedule.

My representative in West Germany, Gerd Sender of a company called ComputerWare, went to the Hanover show. He said that behind closed doors, Atari was showing a 68030 box, and it was supposed to have the AT&T System V version of UNIX. Personally, I'm not really that thrilled about UNIX, and I don't see where Atari has the marketing or distribution channels to sell any sort of high-power business product like that. I would most likely not go with that type of product. I think that Atari does very well selling consumer items. If you look at their last stock report, you'll find that about a quarter of their sales were in home com-

continued on page 376

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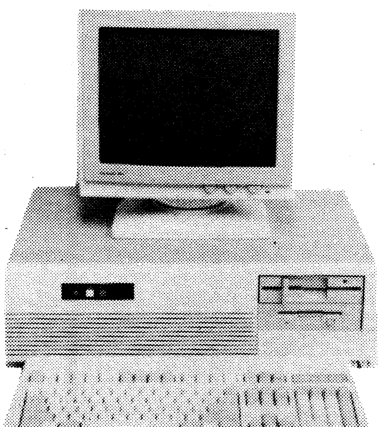

ATARI

Applying The Atari

by Jeff Brenner

This month we'll answer reader mail, publish some reader requests, hear about some new products for the 8-bit Atari, and learn how to add an earphone jack to those television sets or monitors lacking one.

Due to space limitations, the review of the Six-Systems Box from Irata Verlag planned for this issue will be reviewed along with other products from Irata Verlag in a separate review next month.

New Publication

From Technitron comes a report for constructing a power supply for the XL/XE machines that not only imitates Atari's power supply, but also offers battery-backup.

Dear Jeff:

First of all our Atari Group wishes to thank you for all the fine articles you have written in *Computer Shopper*. We are avid readers of your column and look forward to each new edition. It's good to see a dedicated column for the Atari. Your exceptional software articles are the best. We hope to see more of this type of coverage. We also have enjoyed the offers of various Upgrade Plans (the ones offered by STATUS of Thom Lawless 320K-576K 800XL) and the Mods, Fixes and upgrades by the Midwest Atari Group. After seeing these publications and using them we decided to create a publication ourselves.

We are enclosing a copy of our "8-bit Power Supply." We found that often under stress the power supply of the 8-bit gives out. We designed a new power supply and then added not only the convenience of being able to repair it, but the ability of battery backup. The plans are simple and use Radio Shack parts with the exception of two pieces, (a 7-pin DIN plug and some mica insulators which can be obtained easily at local Electronics Wholesale Houses).

This unit has been tried and tested under BBS conditions for some time now with no difficulties whatsoever. We have found it to be very dependable and really a big plus to the BBS since the power often drops off or even out completely in our area from just seconds to hours. With this power supply, there's no need to re-boot the system, the Ramdisk stays active and no memory is lost

We would like to make this report available to other Atari User Groups and interested persons. With this offer we ask that three dollars be sent to each copy to help cover printing and postage. Write: Technitron, PO Box 1033, Wilkes Barre, PA 18702.

William Culver
Technitron

Reader Mail

Dear Jeff:

In reading your column in the February 1988 issue, I noticed a request for a Lotto program, and in your March column, notification of a trend analysis program for use in tracking Lotto numbers.

Our program, "Win At Lotto!" is a computerized implementation of one of the most popular (and successful) wheeling systems currently available. The Atari 8-bit version incorporates five separate wheels, plus win detection routines. The program is 100% machine language, is very user friendly, and has full on-screen documentation.

Since our 8-bit version does not include trend analysis and number selection routines, it may be the perfect companion program for the program you mentioned in March. The list price is $24.95 and we'll cover shipping.

Vern Smith
Phantasy Software
Portland, Oregon

Readers interested in "Win At Lotto!" can write to Phantasy Software and Electronics, Inc., PO Box 13474, Portland, OR 97213.

Dear Jeff:

This letter is to inform you of a small company that makes MIDI interfaces for Atari 8-bit computers. The owner and I talked and I mentioned some sources for selling his product. The MIDI interfaces are compatible with all 8-bit Atari MIDI software and MIDI ports. The interface sells for $135, the cheapest I've seen. Mr. Maki said if there are orders for multiples of six or more from a user group, the prices are $95 each. I've seen this MIDI interface in action and it is what it claims to be, and cheaper compared to other manufactureres. For information contact: Jim Maki, Phas One Engineering, PO Box 773, 537 Camino Ct., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

Kenneth Rogers
Melrose, Massachusetts

Dear Kenneth:

Thanks for sharing the information. Readers may also be able to find a good deal on Hybrid Arts' MIDI interface for the 8-bit since this has been discounted heavily in recent months. (Hybrid Arts produces the popular MidiTrak software for the 8-bit.)

Reader Requests

Dear Jeff:

For the past 15 months I have been trying to get my Panasonic 10911 printer to print subscripts and superscipts as described in the AtariWriter Plus instructions. The instructions say it can be done by using the select key with the up and down arrow keys. The select-up arrow combination should put you in the superscript mode and the select-down arrow combination would restore the original font. The opposite combinations would be used for subscripts.

I am told that it happens with Epson printers and the Panasonic is "100%" Epson compatible. Epson and Panasonic do have the same control codes for subscript and superscript modes. The control code is Escape plus T for cancellation of both modes for both printers. It does not seem possible that one mode can cancel out the other because neither mode sends the cancellation code to the printer.

If there is a printer driver in existence that can allow the printer to follow the keystroke instructions, I have been unable to find it. I am able to enter subscripts and superscripts with control codes and font commands but I would like to use the keystrokes if it is possible. Any assistance you and your readers can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Dominick J. Defazio
Rochester, Michigan

Embedding control codes into the text is always an option to utilize the features of your printer. For printer drivers for various printers (with AtariWriter), here are two sources:

Gary W. Furr
PO Box 1073
Mountain View, CA 94042.

Gary is the original author of the printer driver routines; over 60 drivers are available.

At-A-Glance
86 Ridgedale Ave.
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

At-A-Glance produced "Printer Formatted Data Disk" for AtariWriter with various printers.

In the May 1988 column, reader Richard Cooke had asked if any readers knew of a program to perform bowling league secretary duties. Thanks to Dave Brehm of Mishawaka, Indiana for suggesting a program called Bowling Secretary. Other readers interested in this program might try some user's groups, since it may be difficult to find.

Earphone Jack

From John Baum comes this simple project for adding an earphone jack to your television or monitor.

Dear Jeff:

So the kids are asleep and the computer is in their room? Your little brother has to go to bed before you're through saving the world? Or the wife can't sleep with the warning horns on your favorite flying program blaring? The solution is an earphone jack, easily installed in your monitor. Radio Shack part #247-248 at $1.39 for two is just what you need to silence the speaker but still hear the action.

By splicing one wire from the existing speaker wire to the jack (so that there is a common wire for both the speaker and the jack), and hooking up the other wire (two wires to make a speaker

continued on page 240

ADAM

Simple Database For Adam

by G. A. Smith

Adam owners, if you haven't been able to get your hands on a database program yet, here's a little goody to help you until you can.

The value of typng in this program, is that you will not only acquire a simple database program, but at the same time you may learn something new about your computer. You can modify this program to better suit your needs.

If you know anyone who has an Adam, you may want to tell them about where you got your copy so they can share in the learning experience. Yes, you could give them a copy of the tape or disk. That person would not share in the learning experience.

The beginning of the line has been indented to help you identify the start of a line. You do not indent these when you type in your program.

The "database" has built-in help prompts. To operate, simply follow the menus and/or prompts given. You do not have to count up how many letters/numbers you will put into any "field." The program is set up so this is not necessary.

While we are poking around in the Adam, be careful just what addresses you poke a value into! You will not destroy your computer, but you can wipe out several hours worth of work by accidentally rebooting, locking up the keyboard, or any of several other dastardly deeds. Be sure that you type in all POKE addresses correctly before you try to run any program! Of course, if you PEEK into the wrong address, then you will merely get the wrong value for your variable.

```
  10 POKE 17115,113,: POKE 17126, 128: HOME
S$="Simple Data Base": POKE 23692,-1: P$="Press
number of your selection.": Q$=Press ENTER key."
F$=" File."
  20 HOME: PRINT TAB 9;S$ : FOR I% =100 TO 90
STEP 100 : PRINT I%/100; :ON I% GOSUB 100, 20
300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900: NEXT I%: PRIN
"0. QUIT!": PRINT TAB 5;P$ :X% =9: Y% =0: GOSU
9998
  30 HOME : ON A% GOSUB 100, 200, 300, 400, 50
600, 700, 800, 900: ON A% GOSUB 1100, 1200, 130
1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900: GOTO 20
  40 STOP
  50 HOME : PRINT AT 9,5;"Please INPUT the name
AT 11,5;"for your file."; AT 13,5; "Maximum 9 le
ters: ": INPUT B$: IF LEN B$>9 THEN 50
  60 D$=CHR$(4): PRINT D$;"OPEN ";A$: PRINT D
"READ ";A$: INPUT N: FOR I=0 to N: INPU
C$(I),F$(I): NEXT I: HTAB 1: PRINT D$;"CLOSE ";A
RETURN 1240 FOR I=1 TO N : PRINT C$(I) : INPU
F$(Z,I): IF LEFT$ (F$(Z,I),1)="@" THEN RETUR
  100 PRINT " Format a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 100
  200 PRINT " Add to a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 100
  300 PRINT " View a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 1000
  400 PRINT " Print a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 1000
  500 PRINT " LPrint a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 1000
  600 PRINT " Search a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 100
  700 PRINT " Change a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 100
  800 PRINT " Delete a ";S$;F$;".":GOTO 1000
  900 PRINT " SAVE a ";S$;F$;"."
  1000 PRINT: PRINT: RETURN
```

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ATARI

Applying The Atari continued from page 232

work, remember?) in series to the jack and then to the existing speaker, you'll have an earphone jack that cuts off the internal speaker when the earphone is plugged in. Make sure you hook the wires to the right places. There are three tabs on the back of the jack. With the threads facing away from you, the left tab gets the common wire, the top tab gets the wire from the monitor to the speaker, and the right tab gets a wire from the jack to the existing speaker.

My Commodore 1702 monitor has the jack located behind the little front door and the left corner, but anywhere there is enough room for a quarter hold would be okay.

John Baum
Lisbon, Ohio

Newsletters

We'll pick more winning newsletters in next month's column. Meanwhile, here's a letter I received regarding the newsletter contest.

Dear Jeff:

While I appreciate greatly the fine column you write for *Computer Shopper*, the March '88 column made me bristle!

In the evaluation of the user group newsletters, you stated that "too many newsletters have pages overloaded with often inappropriate or meaningless Printshop and other icons." Your bias towards slick, magazine-like newsletters is apparent; such productions are well deserving of praise, since it is obvious the effort that goes into them is a labor of love. However, the Pinellas Atari Computer Enthusiasts' (PACE) newsletter is equally deserving of praise, produced completely on an 8-bit Atari engine (PACE is a group dedicated to the 8-bit Atari). While there may be laser printers that will tie to an 8-bit (although I doubt it), it is of interest to our group to keep the newsletter within the confines of the machines we deal with; as a result the "meaningless" Printshop icons have definite appeal.

Your selection of the "best newsletter" appears fully deserved; PACE would love to include advertising (there are no retailers in the area) and to include photographs of our activities in the newsletter—but this is overstepping the capabilities of our machines. Don't lose sight of two things: new owners still find "old" articles interesting (there are new 8-bit owners at each of our meetings), and the information contained in the newsletter may very well be "news" to the group, if the editor is aware of his readership.

Once again, I enjoy your column very much. But maybe instead of bashing the "poor" quality newsletters, give them credit for at least producing a banner that their organization finds worthy. I cannot speak highly enough of our newsletter editor, Thomas Davis, and his dedicated staff. Each issue of the P.A.C.E.SETTER gets better than the last, and I sincerely look forward to its delivery with anticipation—even without ads or pictures, and containing meaningless icons—because it has material that I find interesting. Thanks for your Atari support.

Alan Frazer, President
Pinellas Atari Computer Enthusiasts
Clearwater, Florida

Dear Alan:

I thank you for writing and hope I can clarify what qualities I look for when I select a winning newsletter. First of all, "meaningless Printshop icons" was not meant as a generalization of Printshop icons and I hope that others did not similarly misinterpret my statement. What I was referring to was the context in which specific icons are used. For example, I have just picked up a newsletter that has what appears to be a Mickey Mouse icon introducing a "Technical Notes" column. This is what I call a "meaningless" icon, in light of the fact that the image has absolutely nothing to do with the accompanying text. Upon browsing through your P.A.C.E.SETTER newsletter, I see a film projector with the "Next Meeting Preview" heading, a voltmeter icon for the "Local Repair" article, a pair of glasses with the "Library News" article. Now these are NOT meaningless icons, but are fine examples of how Printshop icons can be used.

Additionally, the amount of advertising in a newsletter is mentioned only as an indication of how successful the newsletter is in attracting advertisers, and is not used as a measure of the quality of the newsletter. For example, one recent newsletter winner had several full page advertisements from advertisers across the country. The advertisements did not make the newsletter a winner, but rather the reputation of being an exceptionally well-designed newsletter had attracted the advertisers.

Some of the best looking newsletters I have seen were produced entirely on the 8-bit Atari. Photos can always be directly incorporated into a newsletter to add more excitement, or they can be digitized via an 8-bit ComputerEyes. Any number of the dozens of 8-bit printing utilities can be used to further enhance the image of the newsletter. Don't feel that your newsletter is limited by an 8-bit machine; instead, seek out new ways for your 8-bit to churn out attention grabbing text and graphics.

Finally, I realize that many newsletters are produced on very tight budgets or with very few people, and I would never intentionally "bash" any of them. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to list all of the newsletters in which groups gave it their best shot. Therefore, the "best newsletter" title goes to the newsletter that combines a wide range of non-reprinted articles, useful graphics and illustrations, excellent organization, etc.

Next Month

More reader mail and requests, news and reviews for your 8-bit Atari.

Address all correspondence to: Jeff Brenner, "Applying The Atari 7/88," c/o *Computer Shopper*, PO Box F, Titusville, FL 32781. ●

More Atari
continued on page 241

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

TI Forum
continued from page 238

BASIC is criticized because it permits "spaghetti code" and doesn't force one to do structured programming. But isn't this criticism really an admission of the flexibility of BASIC? One can write very structured programs in BASIC, but a person can also write a "quick and dirty" program as well if he so chooses. It's up to the programmer, and there are times when a "quick and dirty" program is what's needed.

Similarly, BASIC is criticized because of its inclusion of a GOTO statement. It is interesting, however, that assembly language (the language closest to being the native language of the machine) has its own form of GOTO, because that is what B (branch) or JMP (jump) really are. And if GOTOs are so bad, why do people often spend so much time thinking of ways to add them to languages in which they are not innate?

Well, BASIC means Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code, which supposedly proves that it's only for amateur programmers, or so another argument against BASIC commonly runs. (Symbolic Instruction Code, by the way, merely means Language, but BAL wouldn't have made as clever an acronym.) But the fact that BASIC is accessible by more programmers than any other language seems to me to be a virtue rather than a defect. And BASIC is an "All-purpose" language, which declares that it is more versatile than many other languages, e.g., Cobol, Fortran, etc.

If an ordinary TI'er is running an assembly language program and wants to change it, ordinarily he's out of luck. But if the program is written in BASIC (TI BASIC or, more likely, TI Extended BASIC), then he usually can customize it easily in any way he wishes. This, I would think, would seem to be an important factor for those seeking to survive in an orphan community, with little significant support from major commercial software houses.

There are, in my mind, only one legitimate argument against BASIC: the argument that there are certain situations where BASIC does not provide sufficient speed or power to perform certain necessary tasks. Most of the time the commands of BASIC are entirely adequate, especially in interactive-style programs. But what about those situations where BASIC or Extended BASIC does not have the speed or power which is required?

The answer is to extend BASIC further, by adding new commands or subroutines. These new commands may be placed in the module (these are then usually accessible even to those TI'ers with minimal systems) or they may be assembly language subroutines (which need a memory expansion of 32K in which to reside). (Another theoretical answer to the matter of speed would be a suitable BASIC compiler, but in my opinion we do not yet have a thoroughly satisfactory one for the TI-99/4A. Besides, a BASIC compiler may provide an answer for increasing the speed of BASIC, but it does nothing to increase the power of BASIC.)

Just as TI Extended BASIC is actually easier to program in than TI BASIC because of the additional commands, so also "Extended Extended BASICs" are easier to use than "regular" Extended BASIC. The additional commands may include such things as allowing you 40 columns on the screen (instead of the usual 28 or 32), accessing other special graphics modes (e.g., bitmap), peeking and poking in VDP RAM (rather than merely CPU), direct sector access of disks (if you have a disk drive), manipulation of strings and arrays, and much more.

Next month's article will survey some of the specific "Extended Extended BASICs" that are available for the TI-99/4A. Some are commercial software (like Jim Hollender's SXB or Super Extended BASIC, and Chuck Davis' DEP or Display Enhancement Package), while others are fairware programs (like Michael Riccio's STAR or Super TI Assembly Routines, and Curtis Alan Provance's EDP or Enhanced Display Package). Some need a special module (like Mechatronics' Extended BASIC II +, or Triton's SEB or Super Extended BASIC), some are disk-based (like Richard Mitchell's String Master, or my own XXB or Extended Extended BASIC), and one requires a special module, is disk-based, and requires a special RAMdisk (Myarc's Extended BASIC II). Except for the last, none of these costs more than $50 or $60, and most cost much less, but all of them dramatically extend the power of what TI Extended BASIC can do.

Incidentally, I assume that many of the readers of this article do have a 32K memory expansion for their computer, but if you do not, then you should be aware that it is possible to add it inexpensively (perhaps $20 in parts, I'm told) by inserting it directly into the console. (Plans are available on how to do such a "matchbox conversion" for those who are interested.) You do not have to have a disk system to make use of most of the resources mentioned in the previous paragraph, but many of them do require the 32K memory expansion.

In line with the theme of "Extending Extended BASIC," this piece is being extended into next month's issue. ●

More Texas Instruments
continued on page 390

Atari To Create Two Corporate Divisions

by D. F. Scott

In an effort to recapture market territory lost in 1987, Atari Corp. has spun off a new division called Atari Computer, whose entire staff will operate independently of video games, according to Atari Director of Product Marketing Neil Harris.

Charles Babbitt, former high-level employee of Ashton-Tate during the production of dBase III, has been named President of Atari Computer, and has been given until June to coordinate a new marketing strategy for its Mega and ST computers. Anthony Gould, formerly of third-party ST software producer IntelliDesign and a ten-year veteran of IBM, joins Babbitt as his Vice President for Sales.

Atari Corp. CEO Sam Tramiel and President Jack Tramiel will oversee the affairs of the new Computer division, yet perhaps in a lesser capacity than before. Many of the Corp.'s current employees will be reassigned to the Entertainment Electronics division. Michael Katz, former high-level employee at Mattel Electronics and former President of Epyx Software, was unofficially named President of Atari Entertainment Electronics several months ago.

Although details of Atari Computer's marketing strategy have yet to be finalized, it appears the division will operate with its own staff and under its own budget, in much the same way Amiga is run by the umbrella leadership of Commodore Business Machines. The strong success of the Amiga against the ST in the US in 1987 since Max Toy was appointed CEO of Commodore, seems to have been the incentive for Atari to spin off its Computer division.

The public relations firm Winston & Winston has been employed to handle product announcements and official news for the Computer division. Marty Winston, who formerly handled PR for Radio Shack/Tandy Corp., will assume many of the spokesmanship duties formerly handled by Neil Harris. Amidei & Co. will be retained by Atari Corp. for the Entertainment division, despite complaints from corporate officials that its news releases often caused confusion.

Harris will continue with the Computer division as Director of Product Marketing, and will also act as Eastern and Midwest Sales Representative until suitable replacements can be found.

In what Harris described as a "tea leaf reading exercise," he predicted a massive campaign of advertising and repackaging will be under way following the June Computer Dealers' Expo in Atlanta. A new advertising agency is being sought for the production of advertisements in the print media, although arguments reportedly persist within the Corp. concerning just how much broadcast advertising the division can afford.

The full name "Atari Computer" will be displayed in the banners of whatever advertising Atari will produce, and may accompany the "Fuji" logo in the future on all ST, Mega, and Abaq products. The division is planning special packaging arrangements of its Mega and ST computers for educational and desktop publishing customers.

A prototype of a system running under a 68030 CPU has reportedly been perfected, and is running UNIX System V, which is licensed to Atari by AT&T. Neil Harris states that the possibility of negotiating with AT&T for subsequent licensing of its Open Look graphic UNIX operating environment has not been ruled out, although he admits the expense of such an arrangment compared to X Window or NEWS may prevent it from being the right choice.

It appears development of the Helios operating system for Atari's projected Abaq computer, which is based on Inmos' T800/20 Transputer CPU, is totally under the control of Perihelion, Ltd., the British firm working in association with Atari on the project. Key Atari officials have yet to see the first test versions of the parallel processing operating system under development by Tim King, author of AmigaDOS.

"When the Computer division becomes fully operational, states Harris," "its focus will be on the continued development of its ST series of computers." ●

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The ST Control

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puters, and the rest were in video games and 8-bit systems, like the XE Game System. That's where they make the mainstay of their money. Whenever they try to foray into the higher end of the market—like the desktop publishing market with the Mega, or the 68030 machine (let's not forget the 68020 machine that they announced last year)—they fall on their face, because nobody takes them seriously.

If I were head of Development, I would probably come up with a different name for a product; instead of using Atari's name, I'd come up with something else and market it separately. I'd try to make alliances with current distributors of Blue Chip and IBM PCs.

I probably wouldn't get into the UNIX market right now because of the DEC/Apple alliance. It seems right now you've got three major market forces all poised to crunch each other. You've got the AT&T alliance with Sun, you've got IBM's joining up with Microsoft to do Windows, and you've got the DEC/Apple alliance, which gives Apple Macintosh users the VAX ports and VAX interfaces. Those three bit alliances are basically poised at one market, which is the business market. They see small to medium businesses as their target. The large-scale businesses own mini and mainframe systems; IBM has that market pretty much locked up. AT&T has its market with their 63 and 6500 lines of IBM PC compatibles and UNIX machines.

I'd probably not go for the 68030 machine. I would probably go for a consumer-type 68020, or just a 68000 packaged in a smaller box than an ST at a lower price.

John DeMar: [I'd add] a new operating system. UNIX is fine; if the current ST operating system would run on it, that would be acceptable, but to make a real impact on the market, I was impressed with what is claimed to be on the next computer. It needs to be a new version of a windowing environment with multi-tasking, and not just patches upon patches of the current operating system. Hardware-wise, I don't think Atari has any problem coming up with hardware ideas and making hardware announcements, but they don't like to spend money on a new kind of operating system.

What I would add to it to make it more marketable probably would be different than what I would add to it myself as a hacker from way back wanting all kinds of neat stuff on it. If there's any one hardware thing that they need, it's low-cost, true compatible networking software and hardware. That keeps them out of a lot of markets for multiuser business applications. Whatever they come up with, [they should] think about actually producing them, telling people about them, and actually having real customer support for something on that level. I could see the university research person buying a 68030-based Atari and calling the customer service line, and asking a detailed technical question, and the high-school kid on the phone says, "Well, have you checked the joystick port?"

It's going to cost them money, it's going to be a big investment. They haven't really done that on the support end of things; they have to spend a lot of money on that. These kinds of computers are going to require a lot more money spent on customer support.

Dan Moore: I have real doubts whether it's worth carrying an ST OS into the future. It's probably doable, with a lot of manpower, but is it worth it? It doesn't multi-task; not really. Desk accessories don't count. A UNIX box is going to have very little in common with the ST, other than maybe using the ST as a terminal. If they're going to build UNIX boxes, who are they going to sell them to? There is a small hobbyist UNIX market out there: all the kids and people like me who learned UNIX and want a small machine of their own to run it on. But that's not a very big market. We'd be happy with a steel box that's got a power switch.

If you're selling it into the business world, [businesspeople] don't care what's in it, they want a box that's got enough RAM to do their business software, a big enough hard drive—meaning 100 meg or more—a backup system of some sort—a tape unit—and they really don't care about upgradability as long as there is some, so that there's a way to stick in another drive or more RAM in the future. They don't care about the details. Businessmen don't care, if they're buying a box, what kind of card it takes—they just care that it can take the stuff that they might want some day.

If it's sold as a workstation, well, that's another market. That market is concerned with how fast [the machine] can do CAD stuff. They're not really picky about boards, other than [the fact] that there needs to be some. In the workstations, you need to have an EtherNet hook. You need to have hookups to whatever plotters you're going to have, [as well as] very high-res graphics capability. The business people, they'll be happy with color text. They don't need, or have not been convinced that they need, super high-res text.

I don't know what Atari should build, because I don't know who they're trying to sell it to. If you're going to compete with Sun in workstations and engineering, what [engineers] want is probably a 2000x2000 high-res screen—monochrome is acceptable and color would be tremendously great. That would put them beyond what most people are currently doing resolution-wise. That's the only way Atari can get noticed. They're not going to get noticed by price. You can buy stripped Suns for about $3,000. If you're buying an installation for your office, and you're buying workstations, you buy one $10,000 Sun with a monster hard drive on it, and two or three cheap ones that use their EtherNet link to the main one for file storage. That's a pretty cheap set-up for what it does. Can Atari sell that for [less] enough that it's noticeable just for its price?

I know people who use Suns, and one of the things they like about it is, they turned it on and it never broke. Down time was very close to zero. That's what they want. They don't want an ST that you pick up every thirty minutes and shake. I can just see someone picking up their Atari UNIX box and dropping it two inches so it reseats all the chips.

David Beckemeyer: Briefly prefac-

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Metacomo's

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the real advantages C had over Pascal. Information is presented in more than enough detail to allow very serious hacking for people that love to play around near the machine level.

The resource editor and debugger are great for people wishing to get some work done in the shortest possible time. Complete library support for VDI, AES, BIOS, XBIOS and GEMDOS calls means the package is an excellent tool for the intermediate to advanced ST programmer.

It is obvious that a lot of work went into the MCC Pascal package, and it looks like they have done an outstanding job. Several portions of the package (like the linker and resource editor) are excellent stand-alone programs in their own right. All in all this is a very impressive product. As a tool for the serious hacker I'd rate it right up there with Mark Williams C, but of course Pascal is a much friendlier language than C.

MCC Pascal for the ST is far superior to Turbo Pascal on the IBM PC and clones in terms of library support and support tools. The real beauty of MCC Pascal is that it brings real programming power to a class of ST users that may not have otherwise had it. C is not for everyone, but almost anyone can become an expert on Pascal.

The ST software market is soft right now, but I expect that in time MCC Pascal will become one of the top programming pakages for the ST, and there is even a chance it may become "The Top" package for ST programming. Do yourself a favor and check it out: Metacomco plc, 26 Portland Square, Bristol, England. $99.95. ●

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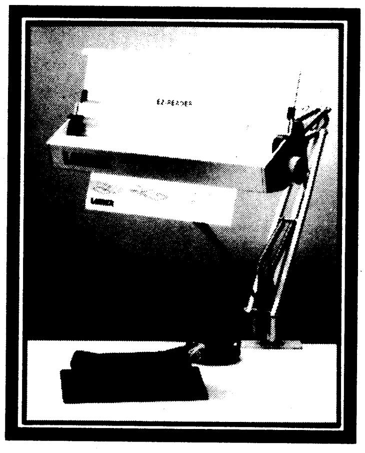

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The ST Control
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ing, my opinion is of course going to be not a marketing-type opinion; but technically speaking, what I would say we want as a neat machine is a 68030—I don't even know that we need to go that route; 68020 is fine with me. You start with a good chip like that, and you put in a standard bus—I don't care which one it is, they're all pretty good: VME, NuBus, anything that's popular and standard in terms of off-the-shelf boards. Make it very low-end, make it open, and have a third party supply UNIX. Don't try to support UNIX at Atari. Have a third party that is well-known and supports UNIX already on several machines, support the UNIX software. Atari goes into the business of selling hardware, and uses their expertise at mass-production and cost-reduction to produce a good hardware box. Then they get out of the software business and operating system business and let somebody else do that. It doesn't matter to me [who it is], just as long as it's well-known, it's real UNIX, and they're supported.

Question Three: Is the ST realm threatened by the Apple vs. Microsoft spat, or is it such a remote issue that we really shouldn't bother with it?

David Beckemeyer: I think there could be long-term effects. I think that, right now, the whole thing is getting thrown around just to set some precedent. When those precedents are established, it could have effects—I think that's not determined yet.

It certainly put things on hold until someone knows for sure [whether the effects are permanent], depending upon which way it goes. I wouldn't care if Apple loses. The other extreme [possibility] is that they win, and then no one could ever produce something that even vaguely looks like the Mac. It's much more likely that something between those two extremes will occur.

John DeMar: It has no effect at all on us. The one indirect thing might be that, on the PC side of things, some developers are scared about what Microsoft Windows might look like if Apple wins. They're thinking of doing alternative environments for windowing stuff. Some people are starting to think more seriously of going to GEM/3. If more support on the PC side goes to GEM, then people will recognize an ST more if they see one. They'll see GEM running on it and say, "Hey, that looks like GEM on the PC."

The PC stuff will have very little effect on the ST. The [PC] users buy software, and don't even know what comes up and boots with GEM built into it. People who run Ventura Publisher don't even know that it's built on top of GEM.

Gordon Monnier: I'm really confused as to why Apple hasn't sued Atari. They went after Digital Research for the same thing, but they don't want to sue Atari. I guess they know Jack [Tramiel] likes to sue people; I think Jack would just love it if they sued him and he got his day in court.

I don't think it's going to affect us, especially now since Xerox has started licensing a desktop presentation program to UNIX producers. Effectively, what Xerox is doing now is, they are licensing what Apple stole from them and is suing other people for. It could really be interesting before this is all over.

Xerox has signed a contract with AT&T and Sun Microsystems, giving them the right to use the desktop icons they developed for the STAR system, which was the granddaddy of it all. That's where Apple got the idea to use it. UNIX is going to have an Apple-like interface [Open Look] sometime this summer or early next winter. There's nothing that Apple can do about it—absolutely nothing—because the STAR system was out long before the Lisa or the Macintosh.

I think the whole thing is that Xerox didn't copyright it. They didn't have to; you don't have to actually copyright something. They're just not a litigous company. I really don't know why they didn't. Now that they're licensing it to people, I don't see what Apple's going to be able to do about it. It's like Steve Jobs says, how the heck can you copyright the image of a trash can?

Dan Moore: Atari's protected. It's nothing to do with them. When Apple went after DRI, DRI probably could've slugged it out and might have won. The thing was, IBM was sitting back there saying, "We ain't gonna market GEM if you're fightin' with Apple." So DRI thought, "Hmm, do we want to sell GEM through IBM and all the IBM Product Centers, and have lots of copies out there, or do we want to fight Apple and win that battle? We'll take the money." They made a deal with Apple. That's the fundamental reason something went down. DRI was in no financial position to have a fight; that's part of the reason that influenced their decision. They couldn't afford not to be involved with the big boys—IBM.

Part of that agreement was, first-party vendors—[such as] Atari, one of the two companies that bought GEM—only were forced to make a change in their agreement whenever [DRI] updated to the newest version of GEM. Atari saw that and they never updated. They're covered. [The others] can fight it out all they want, and it doesn't matter.

It matters from an intellectual side; and to be honest, I don't know which side I want to support. Side One: I like the Apple interface. They are not perfect, but they're closer to perfect than anybody else is right now. They're in the right direction, and everybody else is following them. If they manage to shut everybody else down, it hurts. We can't follow them as quickly.

The other side of it is, Apple really did invent a lot of stuff, if you get right down to it. How much and for what is all debatable and arguable, and that's what we have lawyers and courts for. They did invent some of it; and what they invented, they own. That's the whole idea. That's how we work as a country. If you invent something, and you patent it, you own it. It's protected. Apple filed [a copyright] on paper; the question is whether what they filed on is protectable. The worry I have is not so much if they win or lose, it's a win or lose that makes a decision on what "look-and-feel" means. What I'm worried about is what that says about copyrights in general.

I think copyrights are dying in this country. People do not believe in intellectual property. What's wrong with taping a movie off the TV? What's wrong with taping a movie you rented? What's wrong with taping an album? What's wrong with copying software? It's all the same issue. It's all intellectual property. We already have a Supreme Court which ruled that it's legal to tape movies for your own use. They qualified it, but nobody ever pays attention to qualifying. No matter how you cut it, that is a violation of copyright; that's what it originally meant. What's the most valuable product that'll probably be appearing in fifty years? Intellectual property. The point in all of this is, are we as a country going to continue copyright protection or are we not? From a lot of sides, I would like to see [Apple] lose; but I don't want to be forced, if I want to use that kind of interface, to use Apple's code or go to Apple. I want to be able to do that on my Atari or my Amiga or my IBM or my Sun. Even if I write my own, I know what I want it to look like. There are a lot of things that look right on the Mac.

Fifty years from now, nobody's going to be using windows and mice, I don't think. For the next ten or fifteen, I suspect that's going to be the thrust of the future, until someone comes out with thought waves.

To be honest, I don't think any of it matters in the Atari market, because the direction is so remote that it doesn't matter. A loss of copyright protection, if that does occur, if that concept disappears in the US, it can't be ten to twenty years before it really goes away completely. It takes that long for that big of a shift to occur, if it does occur. If they're still selling Atari STs in ten years, fifteen years, we've got problems.

It could affect Atari on other machines, if they do have an Abaq that

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GeoSynch
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Paint file, giving non-geoPub owners a method to place columns of text and graphics anywhere on a page. In effect, this utility is—with careful placement of tabs and graphics—an effective page-oriented publishing tool. And it works great!

Now, about a small bug in my copy... Some versions of GW-128 have a problem with the bottom row of keys (Z,X,C,V, etc) when used with either SHIFT key. It's named the "Z" bug because almost every time one keys a lowercase "z," and uppercase "Z" appears onscreen. Less obvious, the pointer teleports about the Work Area when other bottom-row keys are pressed in conjunction with a SHIFT key. It's barely noticeable unless the pointer touches the top or bottom of the geoWrite Window. If this happens, the Scroll command takes control and your text crawls away until you move the pointer off the edge. I find any quirk which breaks my concentration on the work at hand a serious limitation. If your copy does this, contact BerkSoft.

geoNews And Notes

The geoPubLaser disk and geoPublish manual revisions were arriving as this column was being written. If you registered your disk, you should have them on hand. Contact BerkSoft if they missed you.

The second, 8 page edition of GEOS NEWS contains an introduction to new and hopefully better customer service procedures by new president and Chief Operating Officer, Dennis Rowland, a peek into the future by CEO Brian Dougherty, mini-overviews of geoCalc and geoFile, a special T-shirt and Commodore hardware (1531 Mouse and 1750/64 REUs) offers, and focuses on LaserDirect. These articles make the Spring '88 issue a general improvement over the too-small Winter '87 GEOS NEWS. If you registered geoUsers haven't yet received a copy, write to BerkSoft.

More important to future publishers like Keith Barton, GEOS NEWS showcases the potential of the geoPublish/PostScript marriage, you see, it's a 100% geoWrite/geoPub-produced effort, printed on an Apple LaserWriter.

Remember the geoFile V-1.0 print bugs? Well the 'File saga continues, at least in my geoUniverse! In my geoFile review several months ago, I stumbled upon a "data disk not found" error.

Well, the bug just might be real, but it might also be limited to a shortlived version. You see, I figured I'd reviewed the latest upgrade—V-1.2. Wrong. The Info Box revealed it to be the interrem Version 1.1. I'll examine 1.2 down the road and clear the air on 'File once and for all.

I've also received reports of a geoPublish "Twilight Zone"—an area of oddness where an occasional piece of text disappears after page swapping. Well, in the third newsletter I created, it happened to me too. After some investigation, I uncovered an answer: it occurs when swapping "pages" (that's an Editor "page" geoPub creates when you click-and-fill a text area in Layout Mode). Fret not: the text is still there, it's just mislaid in the geoPub file.

The early release of 'Pub has this quirk...It's not a real "bug" simply because text should recover it. To determine the quirky Masters, open the Info Dialog Box. If the date reads 11/24/87 or later, you're okay. My Master disk (V-1.0) reads 10/8/87.

Third-Party Releases

A landslide of utilities, applications, and complete programming systems have begun to descend upon us! Here's a small taste of your geoFuture:

BeckerBasic, a GEOS-Basic Language programmer from Abacus' West German connection, the Becker Group. Far beyond a simple utility, BeckerBasic seems a total development package that contains: Pull-Down Menu and Dialogue Box Construction Sets; editing features (TRACE, RENUMBER, DIR, etc.); loop struc-

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The ST Control

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hips, if they do have a UNIX machine, tc. what are they going to look like? f they look like STs they might have roblems. Effectively they've got a icense through DRI right now, which vas licensed to it from Apple—but hat's GEM. That's not the new winlowing OS on the Abaq. If Atari coninues to sell the small volume of nachines that they do, Apple might just lecide to ignore them. Sixty thousand units per year], that's a month or two nonth's production for Apple, so who ares?

Frank Cohen: Pretty much, Apple ad its way with Digital Research over he GEM issue, and that's pretty much ver. I think Apple considers Digital Research is dead in the water as far as leveloping new updates to the GEM ystem—although Digital Research eally doesn't require much of its esources to come up with new versions f GEM. As a matter of fact, I would ay that Atari is so far removed from Digital Research that, even if DRI lecided to come up with another 68000 ersion of GEM—one that supports nulti-tasking, multi-user operations—Atari wouldn't be interested. Those two ompanies couldn't get together, ecause they had such a bad relationship when it came to doing the ST version of GEM. I think that Digital Research and Atari are far removed rom any fallout from that lawsuit.

I talked to Neil Harris [Atari's chief spokesperson] at the November COMDEX in '87 about the Helios system, and his explanation to me was they wanted to make Helios pretty much the standard operating system for Transputers in general. If that's true, then that's pretty much Atari's first real operating system. I don't consider it a possibility that Atari would fight any sort of lawsuit that Apple posed against their proprietary operating system, just because Atari doesn't strike me as the kind of company that would risk losing dollars from a lawsuit rather than marketing a different or modified type of program.

Apple has a vested interest in the visual interface system, as developed by Xerox at the Palo Alto Research Center, because 1% of Apple stock is owned by Xerox. They consider themselves to be the keepers of Xerox's highly proprietary software, even though Xerox wasn't really the first company to be developing it. It wasn't really an invention; it was an evolution of different products. The GKS system from Digital Research was available before the Xerox PARC visual interface system. So I don't think they're going to have any problems.

It's pretty much who has the most clout. Apple sold 1.04 billion dollars worth in the last quarter of 1987. They have money galore, basically—a ton of money for their stockholders. I really don't see why a company like that wouldn't spend money on their legal department. Lawyers have to do something to justify their income. They have the method and the means to go after anybody they want.

Is DOS Dead?

Since many of our questions for the panel concerned UNIX, the question of the future of MSDOS arose somewhat on its own. *Computer Shopper* Associate Editor John Anderson once wrote that if UNIX were to become the next great operating system, he would leave the computer writing business to become a tuna fisherman. In the following excerpts, we ponder whether there's a large trolling net in John's future.

Gordon Monnier: I don't know if [MSDOS] is dying, but I think it's peaked. To be honest with you, I've never liked MSDOS. I started on Radio Shack Model I, Model III; and when we came over to the IBM, actually, it was a giant step backward to use MSDOS. It was nowhere near as good an operating system as you get on the Radio Shack computers. To this day, it's not a whole lot better; it's very hard to use, it's complicated, and if you've got UNIX running under a nice, easy-to-use, user-friendly interface, I think it'd be much better than DOS.

David Beckemeyer: I don't think UNIX is the end-all operating system, but I do think it's going to be the growth operating system for the next few years. Then I hope that we have some phenomenal operating system swamp UNIX, and it eventually becomes the MSDOS of ten years from now. With MSDOS, you're not going to see complete death, because as hardware

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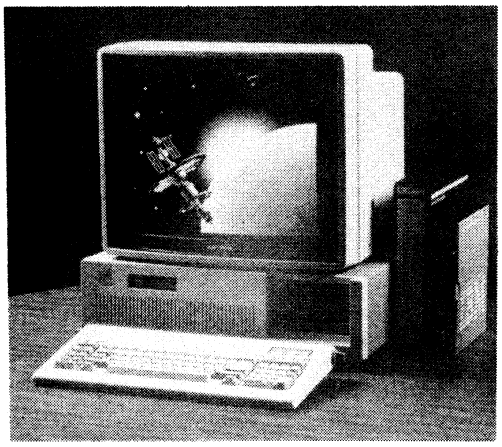

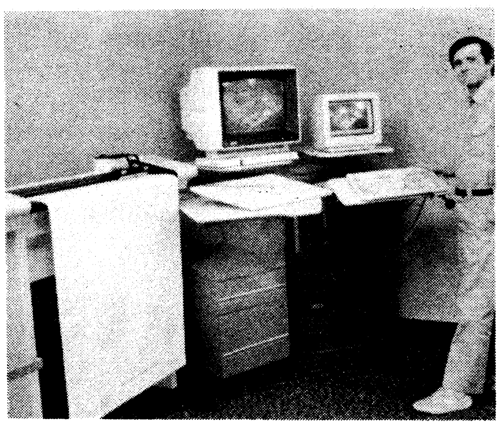

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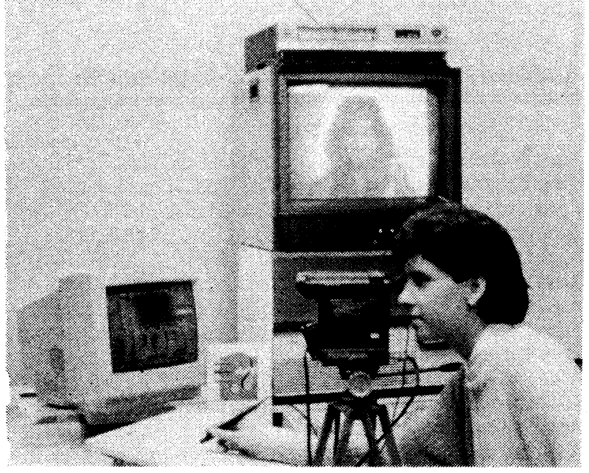

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GFA Draft

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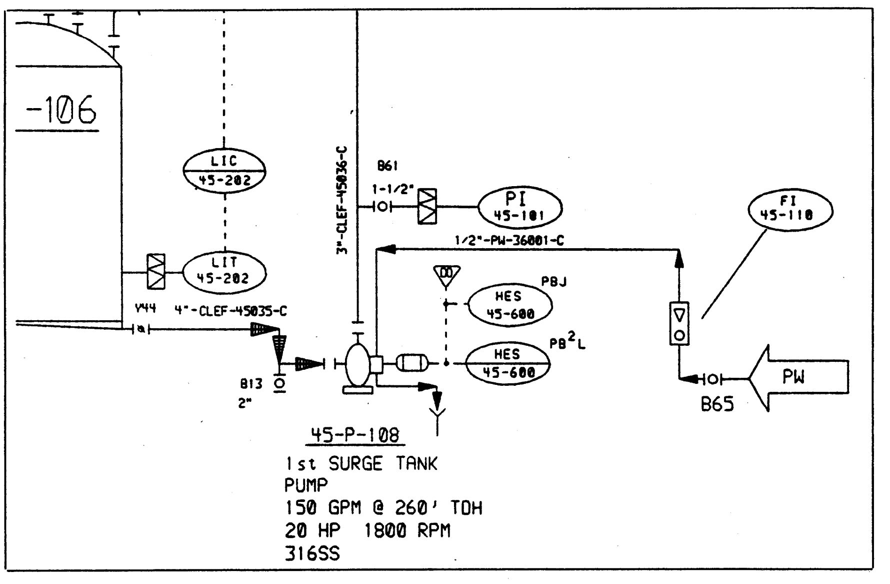
(after I had done the tank drawing) which was to specify the center first with a cross and then draw a circle—still somewhat cumbersome.

Paper size—The maximum size GFA Draft can handle is about 25 inches square—a respectable size although not quite large enough. Any CAD program should be able to handle up to 30"x42" size paper. However, I really should qualify this. At first I considered this a real drawback. But I recently visited a friend (the one mentioned earlier) who is starting up his own business in piping design. All he has is a plotter to handle 11"x17" paper. So I must now state this is not nearly the short coming I considered it to be. Also, in my work, it is not unusual for us to receive drawings from tank and equipment companies on drawings with dimensions smaller than 30"x42."



Line types—There need to be more line types available to the user or the user must be able to customize a line type such as a hydraulic or pnuematic line type.

Compatibility—In order for GFA Draft to graduate from being just a handy tool in the office to an absolute necessity, it must be compatible with other types of file formats used by other more powerful CADD programs either by way of a translator or directly.

Intergraph is an extremely powerful high-end drafting design system we are currently using at Fluor-Daniel. Available to the engineers on a Macintosh computer is a program called Snap! which translates Intergraph format. One simply downloads the Intergraph file onto the Macintosh, boots up Snap!, translates to Snap! format, makes the appropriate changes, translates back to Intergraph format and then uploads back to the VAX.

Another widely accepted format is the Initial Graphics Exchange Specification. This can be read by Intergraph and version 9 of AutoCad and would probably be a good choice for GFA Draft in which to output its files.

Text fonts—GFA Draft has only two text fonts for use—normal and bold. For most utilitarian purposes these are adequate but for greater versatility more are definitely needed.

Tangent to an arc or circle—This feature is missing and is really a "must" item that should be included.

Grid lock—Although the ability to lock the cursor or line to the grid is missing, it is possible to change the cursor incremental movement to match the grid. Unfortunately this isn't quite as effective.

Levels—GFA Draft can display 16 out of 256 levels on the screen at once, which for most applications would be adequate. The program needs to display more—say around 30 to 40.

Units—As a bare minimum, the program needs to represent inches as fractions. To be more widely accepted, it must also display dimensions in terms of feet and inches.

GEM Windows—GFA Draft, much to its credit, utilizes the GEM interface making access to desktop accessories a

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matures, you're going to have products like Locust DOS-Merge, which allows DOS to run as an application under UNIX.

I think IBM themselves and Microsoft finally signed DOS' death warrant by saying, "Yea, we've been saying all along you didn't need multi-user, multitasking; but here's OS/2, now multitasking's what you really need, we were wrong all along." If I'm an operating system buyer, I'm going to look at track records, and UNIX has certainly been around a lot longer than OS/2, and has as much DOS compatibility as OS/2 does, because you can run products like DOS-Merge. So I think DOS is dying in the long term; it'll be a home computing system for awhile, because the PCs and clones, there are probably 50 million of them.

Now is the window for UNIX to really bloom—and the first indications are that it's blooming like mad. The first signs are indicating that OS/2 may not do so hot, and UNIX will be the main system in existence, scaling from the supermicros to the minis. But there's always a possibility; we can't underestimate IBM's and Microsoft's marketing ability. And there are a lot of DOS users out there who haven't switched to anything yet, who could potentially go the OS/2 route based on marketing issues. If you put them merit-by-merit, most people would choose UNIX, especially with the installed base getting as big as it is, and the fact that you can communicate with it very easily.

John DeMar: Someday I hope the masses realize that being compatible with MSDOS is like making sure everyone drives a Model T forever. I have an AT-compatible now; it's sitting right here next to me. It's like having a Ferrari without a steering wheel. You boot it up, and it says, "A-colon-greater than." That's it. You come into my office, and there's my four computers—there's a Mega, a regular ST, an 8-bit Atari that's sitting in the corner, and you've got this off-the-wall brand-name AT-clone sitting there. You bring somebody into the room and say, "Point to me which one of these is the most powerful computer," and he'll look at this AT-clone with its huge case and all these things sticking out of everywhere, and they say, "Wow, look at that computer!!" It's got 512K of memory, and I've got a Mega 4 sitting here. I got GEM for this PC and I got a mouse, but it's a pain to get everything installed and coming up.

Once people realize nobody's educating the 10 million plus people who use PCs that it doesn't have to be that way, that there's something on the other side of the hill that's greater, somebody [will find] the marketing clout to do that. IBM itself shows this PS/2 stuff with the promise of this kind of a thing; but they're the wrong people to do it. They have too much to lose in telling people that there's something better.

In our next edition, we'll ask our panel three more relevant questions, as well as listen to some uninitiated opinions and anecdotes about issues our questions didn't cover. ●

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7 Mini Book
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chapters, with special emphasis on taking advantage of the new multi-tasking power of OS/2, and compatibility considerations while making the transition.

How To Run a Hard Disk PC
Thomas Wrona. Scott, Foresman. (1988) ISBN 0-673-38057-2 245 p. $19.95 (companion disk: 5-1/4" for $10, 3-1/2" for $12)

This book is not for everyone, but it is ideal for at least one large class of readers, namely business and hobby users who have a limited amount of experience with an older PC or compatible running an early release of MSDOS with just floppies, and who are apprehensive about upgrading to a machine with a hard drive and a later release of DOS with hierarchical directories, pathnames, etc.

This text has lots of useful hints, covering DOS up through version 3.3 as well as several of the more popular shells and "navigation aids." The eight chapters are provided with a couple of short review tests, and appendices include a table of DOS commands and a directory of sources of hard disk utility software, including public domain and shareware as well as commercial programs.

Working With ORACLE
Jack Hursch, Ph.D. & Carolyn Hursch, Ph.D. TAB / TPR Books. (1987) ISBN 0-8306-2916-5 228 p. $19.95

Although Oracle is not as familiar to most microcomputer users as such relational database products as dBase, Reflex, Lotus, and so on, it has one very important advantage; compatible versions are already in use on many mainframe and minicomputer systems in the business world, and Structured Query Language, (SQL) the programming language it supports, is already familiar to many MIS professionals in larger installations. If you have to integrate assorted PCs and PC-LANs in a business with minis and mainframes already in place, teaching the PC users to use Oracle and SQL may be cheaper and easier than retrofitting a more commonly used PC DBMS on the mainframes, or having a programmer write a custom TDF/DFP file processor "bridge" for the system.

This text covers all the basics in 16 chapters, with appendices on Oracle's reserved words, the INIT.ORA parameters, and a glossary. The first half, about 8 chapters or so, is aimed at administrators who need to understand the whole system. The second half, beginning with chapter nine, is detailed nuts-and-bolts advice for users who need to create and merge tables, views, and indexes, write reports, etc. All versions of Oracle up through v.5.0 are included. ●

GFA Draft
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true advantage. However, GEM supports up to four windows on the screen at once. GFA Draft would do well to use this function. In that manner, portions of one drawing could easily be transported to another and more than one view of a drawing could be seen at once.

Interfacing—Although all commands are effectively executed using the mouse, the user should be given the option to enter them via the keyboard.

User-specified polygon—An excellent feature to add would be the ability to specify the number of sides of a polygon and have the program draw it much like a circle. Without this function, I found trying to make triangles a little cumbersome.

BUGS—GFA Draft is a very solid, well written program. The only bug I ran into was when I tried to manipulate accessory windows. They had a tendency to "drop" behind the drawing window. This was rather frustrating to say the least. The trick was to use accessories that one would not or could not move around. Hopefully, this bug will get fixed soon.

Support—One thing to keep in mind is this is not Michtron's program—it is GFA Systemtechnik's out of Germany. Because of this fact, do not expect prompt answers to any questions one might have. I should say, though, Michtron made every effort to have all my questions answered as soon as they could.

Conclusion—GFA Draft is a very competent, very reliable, very elegantly written drafting program. At the price it is offered, ($70.00 mail order), it is indeed a good buy. It is, and has the potential to become even more so, a very real alternative to the higher priced drafting programs in the market today. ●

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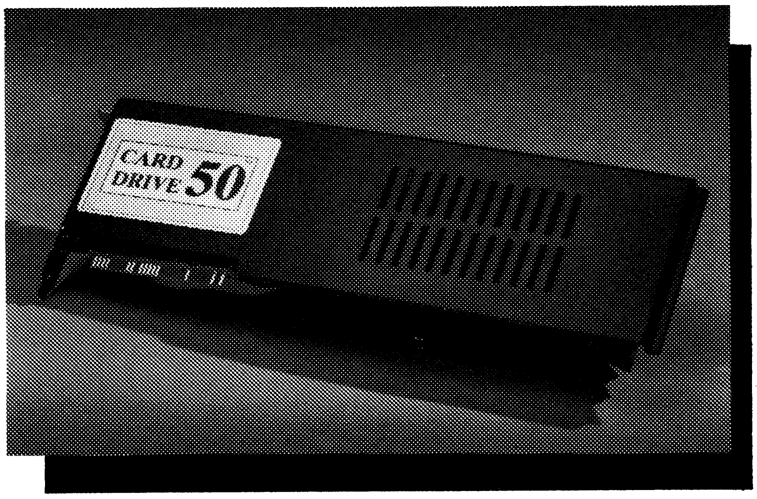

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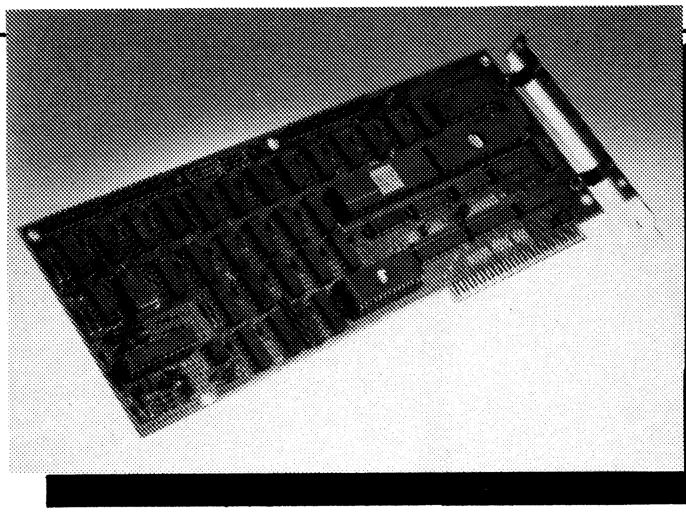

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Atari Shows New PCs At Hanover

Special Report From
***Computer Shopper*, U.K.**

Atari's PC compatible range is now beginning to look more organized as the company exhibited a full range of business and corporate systems, including its new 80286-based machine, a 68030 workstation and the ABAQ transputer, at the Hanover Fair (March 16-20).

There are now four PCs either in existence or planned, logically named PCs 1 through 4. The PC1 and PC2 are the entry level machines announced and released last year. The PC3 is also based on the 8088 processor, with, according to Atari UK's managing director, Bob Gleadow, "a different housing, one more expansion slot and a real-time clock.

"We'll be supplying the PC3 into European systems houses later this year as we move the PC2 down into the consumer market. The PC3 will be targeted at corporate buyers," Gleadow explained.

VGA Compatibility

The PC4, the 286 machine, will be sold in a number of configurations, and will be VGA display compatible. The basic "shell" of the machine comprises 1Mb RAM, running at speeds of 8MHz and 12MHz, with both floppy and hard disk controllers, plus two serial and one parallel port, five expansion slots and a mouse controller.

Along with VGA compatibility, the machine will also support CGA, EGA and Hercules graphics standards. The floppy disk controller will support four drives, whether 5¼" or 3½" is up to the user, or Atari's final decision on the packaging of the machine.

The most basic configuration available to dealers will probably comprise a single floppy disk drive, 30Mb hard disk and EGA screen, and will be priced "very aggressively," says Gleadow. He would not disclose an exact price.

Nor is it entirely clear when the PC4 will be available in the UK. Its release appears to depend on Atari's production lines. "We're having difficulties expanding our manufacturing facilities at the moment," said Gleadow, "But it should be late April or early May."

The 68030 workstation is designed to run Unix for multi-user systems. It too is on display at Hanover, although only to selected trade representatives, rather than on Atari's public stand, and is unlikely to be available in the UK until the autumn.

The ABAQ transputer on show should be a production model. Based on Inmos's T800 transputer processor, and with its Helios operating system written by Perihelion, ABAQ will also support the Unix operating system.

Taken ABAQ

It has 4Mb RAM and a further 1Mb Video RAM, and is linked with up to 12 other transputers. Other interfaces include SCSI and ACSI, RS232, Centronics, and ports for connecting a mouse and floppy disk drive.

Again, Atari hopes to make the machine available by the end of this year.

Finally, Atari's CD-ROM unit should also be released this summer. The CD-ROM is currently being made available to software houses and other developers for databases to be transferred onto it.

The software being written will be mainly targeted at companies which need alternatives to micro-fiche and related methods of data storage. ●

More Than Just Words

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users to layout newsletters, calendars, invitations, and posters with a minimum of effort. The authors have provided great flexibility in both graphic and text processing. A variety of fonts and clipart is provided. Printer support is extensive and most commonly used dot-matrix printers will function with Outrageous Pages. This is the kind of program that makes you want to create projects just to see what it can do.

The program uses key disk protection and you are encouraged to make and use backups. In addition to the six disks needed to hold all of the program, printer specifications, templates, cutouts and fonts, you will need another blank disk to put your pages on. If you plan to create and save your own fonts and cutouts, you'll need a blank disk for them. Each page disk can hold only 3 pages, so buy a box of disks when you buy the program.

Templates provided on the three disks include three kinds of newsletters, a calendar, an invitation, name tags, letterhead, and two certificates (half and full page). Using lines and borders, you can create your own templates, as well.

A convert utility allows you to import graphics created by or provided with other programs. You can import Print Shop graphics (and other compatible artwork such as Epyx's Scrapbook clipart). The convertor program also adjusts Newsroom graphics for use with Outrageous Pages. The convertor is not integrated into the program, so they recommend converting a bunch of graphics and saving them to an art disk before you start a session with Outrageous Pages. The convertor was reasonably easy to use, though you need to know the file names of the graphics you plan to convert because it does not use a menu system to present them to you.

That's one of the few places where the program is a bit clumsy. The rest of the package is pretty well integrated. There is a graphics editor/drawing program to let you create pictures for use on your pages. Called the graphics studio, it is a first rate drawing program in its own right.

The image editor lets you copy and size graphics for use on your pages. With it, you can put your graphics creation on the page wherever you like. Once placed, any text flowed onto the page will go around the graphic. A ghosting feature lets you place only the white or dark pixels on your page. In this way, you can "see through" the transparent portion (whichever of the two colors you are not placing) to view whatever lies beneath.

With the image editor you can also copy, flip, stretch, and rotate your graphics. Its zoom mode lets you get in close for detail work.

A font editor allows you to modify one of the 50 fonts provided or to start out from scratch designing your own. A pattern editor lets you specify repeating patterns that can be used to add texture to your creations. These two modules use an identical user interface, so you don't need to unlearn and relearn commands and procedures.

Of course, without a decent text editor it would all be useless. Though the one provided isn't real complicated, the program accepts files from Bank Street Writer, PaperClip I, II or III (if they are saved on ASCII format) or any other word processor that saves ASCII text in PRG or SEQ form. It may take several input operations before all your text is put on the page, since the program only inputs enough text to fill the currently viewed page section and each page contains several sections. This can be a major hassle if you have only one drive.

You can enter text directly through the keyboard if you want.

Disk access routines let you save pages, cutouts, fonts, patterns and printer specifications. A printer manager section controls printer information. You specify the printer type and its location (serial port, parallel or RS-232). You can do a preliminary print to the screen, if you wish. There is no way to print the file to disk. If you are using an Epson printer you can print in Near Letter Quality.

The documentation contains plenty of illustrations, including samples of all the fonts and cutouts provided.

I found this package fascinating and only wish I had more time to play with it. The $49.95 price tag is well in line with the program's capabilities and usefulness.

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